

local officials to purchase the items they need to improve safety in their communities, while saving money at the same time.

The GSA Schedules are catalogues of more than 4 million commercial goods and services currently available to federal agencies at negotiated discount prices. Since 2002, Congress has enacted "cooperative purchasing" legislation that authorized state and local governments to purchase IT equipment and disaster recovery items from GSA schedules.

This bill further expands that authority to purchase items such as bomb detection equipment, perimeter security systems, and other homeland security goods and services from GSA Schedule 84.

It is important to note that this bill imposes no federal mandate and requires no new spending. Participation in the cooperative purchasing program is voluntary for both state and local governments and vendors. The analysis prepared by the Congressional Budget Office indicates that the bill has no net impact on federal spending and is the opposite of an unfunded mandate—in fact, it is a benefit to state and local governments.

This bill was developed jointly with the ranking member of the Government Management Subcommittee, Mr. BILBRAY. I thank him for his contribution to this legislation.

I urge all my colleagues to support H.R. 3179.

Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak in favor of H.R. 3179, the Local Preparedness Acquisition Act. I am pleased to serve as the original cosponsor of this legislation. I also want thank Congressman TOWNS for his leadership in sponsoring and advancing this important idea.

H.R. 3179 will allow State and local governments to purchase homeland security products and services at more reasonable prices by providing them access to the General Services Administration schedules. Following the attacks on September 11, our local and State governments have taken on more responsibility for emergency preparedness and homeland security. With this added responsibility, these local governments need to purchase a wider array of goods and services.

Under this legislation, these localities will be able to purchase many products such as access control and perimeter security systems, fire detection and suppression equipment, firefighting clothing and marine craft from the GSA schedules. With this option, the cost of many of these products will be less than the cost of purchasing them from State-approved purchasing lists or the open marketplace, saving these local governments valuable tax dollars.

Importantly, this legislation does not impose any requirements on States and localities to utilize the GSA schedules, instead offering an additional voluntary purchasing method.

This legislation has strong bipartisan support and was passed out of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee by voice vote. Additionally, it has gained the endorsement of the National Association of Counties and many other outside organizations.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak in favor of this bill. I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3179, the Local Preparedness Acquisition Act, intro-

duced by my distinguished colleague from New York, Representative TOWNS. This important legislation amends title 40 of the United States Code to authorize the use of Federal supply schedules for the acquisition of law enforcement, security, and certain other related items by State and local governments.

In the post-September 11 era, with the advances in technology, communication and transportation, the likelihood of a situation escalating from an emergency to a disaster to a catastrophe has increased. This Nation is dependent upon the services of its first responders, and as such we cannot shirk responsibility for their well being when we put them in harm's way. Since the catastrophe of September 11, 2001, the need to anticipate and provide necessary resources to our emergency workers has been brought to Federal attention.

The Federal Government has a responsibility to plan ahead and develop a strategy of what will occur should a catastrophic event ever take place. As can be seen with the World Trade Center Worker and Volunteer Medical Monitoring Program, which was established in 2004 by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, it has been insecure in its funding since its inception and is estimated to be out of outpatient awards by the end of FY 2007. This type of haphazard funding and insecurity about the program's future is not what our first responders risked their lives for.

In order to enact any meaningful change, we must understand and identify the unique situations that face our first responders and then try to address any preventative pre-emptive actions that are possible. This includes Federal inquiry into the recognition and management of mental health defects, plans for short- and long-term health monitoring, quality of personal protective equipment, proposed research or lack thereof, and the national response plan. The necessity of inquiry into and improvement and solidification of these issues cannot be overstressed in looking to the future and how our Nation will deal with caring for the first responders during a disaster.

Mr. Speaker, as we witnessed in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and Hurricanes Rita and Katrina, our Nation's first responders were not prepared for the realities of the catastrophes they faced. We can ensure future safety and protection of our first responders by making sure their personal protective equipment is sufficient to handle any future risks. It is our obligation to make sure the funds for the proper equipment is being received through Federal grant programs so that in the case of a catastrophe, they will be able to safely respond to hazardous materials, biological agents, and other harmful materials.

This legislation is important because it amends title 40 of the United States Code to provide necessary equipment to our Nation's first responders. In the wake of the tragedies of September 11 and Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the necessity for the provision of appropriate technologies, including interoperable communications and the availability of emergency equipment, became painfully apparent. This legislation calls for the availability and provision of alarm and signal systems, facility management systems, firefighting and rescue equipment, law enforcement and security

equipment, marine craft and related equipment, special purpose clothing, and related services. By amending title 40 of the United States Code, this legislation is an important step towards ensuring that America's first responders are adequately prepared for any situation that may arise.

Mr. Speaker, I support the passage of H.R. 3179 and call on my colleagues to do likewise because I strongly believe that it will strengthen our Nation's efforts to confront the disasters.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CARDOZA). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3179.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with an amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 3996. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend certain expiring provisions, and for other purposes.

CORRECTING THE ENROLLMENT OF H.R. 1593, SECOND CHANCE ACT OF 2007

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 270) to make corrections in the enrollment of the bill H.R. 1593.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 270

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring) That, in the enrollment of the bill H.R. 1593, the Clerk of the House of Representatives shall make the following corrections (with page and line numbers referring to the page and line numbers of the bill as engrossed in the House):

(1) Page 17, strike line 21 through page 18, line 23 and insert the following:

“(1) FEDERAL SHARE.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Federal share of a grant received under this section may not exceed 50 percent of the project funded under such grant.

“(B) IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—Subject to clause (ii), the recipient of a grant under this section may meet the matching requirement under subparagraph (A) by making in-kind contributions of goods or services that are directly related to the purpose for which such grant was awarded.

“(ii) MAXIMUM PERCENTAGE.—Not more than 50 percent of the amount provided by a recipient of a grant under this section to meet the matching requirement under subparagraph (A) may be provided through in-kind contributions under clause (i).